CLAIMS

1.   A method of facilitating delivery of a document from a source to a destination over a network when an initial delivery attempt has been unsuccessful, comprising:

initiating a rule-based process to determine a next action based on a time variable set of input conditions to the process.

2.   The method of claim 1, wherein the input conditions are determined from one or more of:

- ▶   the destination;
- ▶   the source;
- ▶   a database of past delivery attempts to the destination;
- ▶   a human analyst.

3.   The method of claim 1, wherein the next action includes a next delivery attempt and if the next delivery attempt is not successful, the process is repeated.

4.   The method of claim 1, wherein the input conditions include information regarding what happened on a previous delivery attempt to the destination.

5.   The method of claim 1, wherein the next action includes one or more of:

- ▶   resubmitting the document to the network for a next delivery attempt;
- ▶   canceling the document;
- ▶   sending a request to the source for additional delivery information;

> ▸ sending a request to the destination for additional delivery information;

> ▸ identifying the destination as a technical problem.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the input conditions include an identification of non-business days at the destination.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein the identification of non-business days is categorized by one or more of country, region and destination number.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the input conditions include an identification of non-business hours at the destination.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein the input conditions include alternative delivery instructions at the destination.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the alternative delivery instructions are categorized by one or more of country, region and destination.

11. An integrated and automated document handling system for facilitating delivery of a fax document from a source to a destination in a network, the system comprising:

an automated rule-based process for determining an action based on a set of time variable input conditions;

the input conditions being derived from one or more of:

> ▸ the destination;

> ▸ the source;

> ▸ a database of past delivery attempts;

> ▸ a human analyst; and

an output from the rule-based process which causes a predetermined action based on a predetermined set of input conditions.

12. A method for automated and integrated document handling to facilitate delivery of a document from a source to a destination over a network, the method comprising:

attempting a standard delivery of the fax document over a network from the source to the destination;

if the standard delivery is not successful, initiating a rule-based process which determines an action based on time variable conditions;

determining a first set of time variable conditions for the document based on input from one or more of:

> ▸ the destination;

> ▸ the source;

> ▸ a database of past delivery attempts to the destination;

> ▸ a human analyst;

the rule-based process determining a first action from the first set of conditions;

implementing the first action;

if delivery is still not successful, determining a second set of time variable conditions for the document based on the above-designated inputs;

the rule-based process determining a second action from the second set of conditions;

implementing the second action; and

repeating the above steps of determining conditions and implementing actions until the document is delivered or declared undeliverable.